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RAIL FARES CUT BY UP TO 25% FOR AC CHAIR CAR AND EXECUTIVE CLASSES

The discount scheme will be implemented with immediate effect and shall be applicable to all trains having AC seating, including Vande Bharat

DISCOUNT TO BE BASED ON OCCUPANCY LEVELS

The scheme will be applicable in all classes based on occupancy levels, the Railways ministry said in a press release. Classes where occupancy is less than 50% during the last 30 days will be taken into consideration. While the scheme will be implemented with immediate effect, there will be no refund of fares for tickets that have already been booked | P9

MORE POWER TO ZONAL-LEVEL MANAGERS

- The ministry will delegate powers to principal chief commercial managers of railway zones to introduce discounted fare schemes in trains with air-conditioned seatings to improve occupancy
- The scheme will be reviewed periodically, and based on changes in occupancy levels, it may be withdrawn or modified, the ministry said

21%

WAS THE JUNE OCCUPANCY LEVEL ON INDORE-BHOPAL VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS

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THE GREAT INDIAN CONSERVATION CRISIS

PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

TMC, BJP, CPM members among at least 12 killed in Bengal polls

Bombs hurled, bullets fired, people beaten up as violence mars 3-tier panchayat elections

PRONAB MONDAL @Kolkata

AT LEAST 12 people were killed and several others injured on Saturday, including a Trinamool Congress candidate for a gram panchayat seat and a BJP polling agent, in widespread violence as Bengal went to polls to decide who will control the state's rural landscape.

Bombs were hurled, bullets fired and rivals attacked with sticks and sharp weapons in the turf war during the three-tier panchayat elections. As many as 2.06 lakh candidates are in the fray for 73,887 seats. Polling was suspended in 1,043 of the total 61,636 booths as ballot papers and ballot boxes were snatched and either thrown into nearby pond or set ablaze.

Ballot boxes was seen set ablaze in Cooch Behar's Dinhata and a youth was spotted fleeing with one such box in the same district. The presiding officer in a booth in Birbhum's Mayureshwar was seen crying after the polling station was vandalised.

In Raninagar in Murshidabad, policemen were seen aiming guns while dispersing Trinamool supporters assembled in front of a booth.

Though the State Election Commission did not give any official toll, seven of the victims were identified as Trinamool workers who faced strong resistance from the Opposition both in north and south Bengal districts. Two BJP supporters, two CPI(M) activists and a Congress supporter were also killed in the violence. The overall toll since the rural poll was announced has gone up to 31.

Union home minister Amit Shah's office called up BJP's state president Sukanta Majumdar for a briefing. "I was asked about the violence during the panchayat elections. I will submit a written report," said Majumdar.

While the Opposition alleged that Central paramilitary forces were not properly deployed, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiva Sinha said they had requisitioned 837 companies of the Central Armed Paramilitary Force (CAPF), but only 649 companies were available. Asked about bullets fired during the poll, Sinha said, "No one can guarantee when who will open fire at whom."

Joining issue with the state election body, the BSF wrote to it complaining that despite seeking data on sensitive booths, no information was shared with them.

Police personnel baton charge (from L) after a clash during panchyat elections, at Nagaria village in Malda district of Bengal; an injured security personnel in South 24 Parganas; and rival party workers clash at Barasat in North 24 Parganas district | P11

Jain seer killed, body parts dumped into borewell

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Belagavi

A Jain seer, who went missing on Wednesday night from his ashram at Hirekudi village in Chikkodi taluk, was found murdered on Saturday.

Nandi Maharaj

The body of Acharya Shri Kamkumar Nandi Maharaj of Nandi Parwat Ashram was chopped into several pieces and dumped into an open borewell on the outskirts of Katakbhavi village near Raibag. Police have arrested two persons in this connection.

According to the police, the accused confessed to killing the seer and throwing his body parts into the borewell. The Katakbhavi-Mugalkhod road was closed for traffic for some time to recover the body parts.

SP Sanjeev Patil said a devotee filed a complaint on Friday stating that the seer went missing on Wednesday night.

"We launched an investigation and took two persons, who knew the seer, into custody. The duo confessed to killing the seer at the ashram and throwing his body parts into the borewell. The accused stated that they killed the seer because he started forcing them to return the money they had borrowed from him," he said. P5

EXPRESS READ

Restaurants in Bengaluru to run 24/7 soon

Bengaluru: To boost the image of Bengaluru under the ambitious Brand Bengaluru initiative, hotels and restaurants in the tech-capital will be open round-the-clock within a week. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who held a meeting with Bruhat Bengaluru Hotels' Association members on Saturday, gave his approval to their long-pending demand. P2

EXPRESS INTAKE Probe into Nadda's poll violation stayed | P5 | 83 from K'taka stranded in Amarnath | P5

Madhya Pradesh village takes bridge to new life

FIROZ MIRZA @Chennai

IF any place can remotely resemble a utopian society, Raibidpura, perhaps would come close. The villagers live in harmony and for the last few years they have hardly witnessed any crime. They sow crops that are non-conventional. Slowly their village is getting recognition as well. Not for their cultivation but for the sport they passionately follow, and the sport they believe has moulded their society. Now, two of their girls — Kalpana Gurjar and Vidya Patel — are set to represent India at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. MORE ON: P13

Kalpana Gurjar and Vidya Patel with their parents | SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

DFRL's desi foods for Indian astronauts bound for ISS

BK LAKSHMIKANTHA @Mysuru

THE Mysuru-based Defence Food Research Laboratory (DFRL) has developed desi foods for four Indian astronauts who are likely to travel to International Space Station (ISS) on a joint India-US mission in 2024.

DFRL has developed sooji halwa, vegetable biryani, chicken biryani, parota, sambar chawal, veg katti roll, chicken katti roll, chikki, chicken pulav, ready to drink tea/coffee, lemon juice, processed nuts, moong dal halwa, potable water and saline for the astronauts.

The four astronauts, who are IAF pilots, have been trained by Russian space agency ROSCOMSO for the first ISRO's manned mission to space, Gaganyaan. They are likely to be trained by US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and travel to ISS before Gaganyaan.

According to DFRL scientists, the space foods developed by them are lightweight, low-volume, easy-to-consume, low-fragmentation and wholesome.

DFRL technical officer Mahesh said the space foods contain more nutrients, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. They contain less spices, salt and fat. They are easy to digest and will be in paste and semi-solid and come in special packets. He said they have a sheif-life of one year.

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